

## Roll Call Report

## Congress' spending on self grows fastest

By Richard G. Thomas  
special writer

Lawmakers who tout themselves as deficit-busters on Capitol Hill are unlikely to cite record-breaking House and Senate operating budgets for fiscal 1987 to document their claim.

One of Congress' parting acts was to approve a new legislative branch appropriations bill. Compared to 1986, it grew four times faster than the Pentagon budget and three times faster than inflation.

LAWMAKERS actually approved hefty increases for their own travel, mailing costs, committees, furniture, telecommunications and other elements of the legislative branch budget.

The House set its fiscal 1987 budget at \$463.9 billion, 8 percent over 1986.

Senate increases were nearly 10 percent over fiscal 1986 level, to \$307.6 million.

For the entire Congressional budget, which also funds support agencies such as the Library of Congress and General Accounting Office, the growth rate was 5 percent, from \$1.56 billion in 1986 to nearly \$1.65 billion in 1987.

BY CONTRAST, the Defense Department budget was increased by slightly more than 1 percent, from 1986 to 1987. Domestic spending was virtually frozen at 1986 levels.

At the beginning of the 1970s, \$340 million was enough to run the legislative branch for a year.

But now, "if current trends continue, Congress will become a \$2 billion bureaucracy by 1988," says the Tax Foundation, a private organization that monitors the Congressional budget.

THE COMFORT Index chart shows how area lawmakers stood on all 1986 record votes on the legislative branch budget, their personal income and campaign finances.

Only seven such record votes occurred during the year. Members averted yeas and nays, if possible, when the issue was their own budget. One issue on which lawmakers averted a vote was the 3 percent pay hike they approved for themselves as part of the omnibus 1987 appropriations bill. Effective in January, it sets salaries at \$77,353.

Here are descriptions of the 1986 Comfort Index issues.

1. OUTSIDE INCOME — On April 23, the House voted, 333 for and 68 against, to consider legislation that reinstated 30 percent of salary as the maximum its members can receive in outside income in speech honoraria and other professional fees.

This rolled back a 40 percent ceiling that had been in effect for just one day.

A yes vote was in favor of limiting outside income to 30 percent of Con-

gressional pay.

Voting yes: Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth; Dennis Hertel, D-Harper Woods; Sander Levin, D-Southfield; William Broomfield, R-Birmingham. Voting no: William Ford, D-Troy.

2. CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET — The House on July 29 voted 265-

145 to appropriate more than \$1.3 billion in fiscal 1987 for all congressional operations except Senate. While later completed the legislative branch budget by approving \$307 million for itself as well as miscellaneous outlays.

A yes vote was in favor of the House version of the legislative branch budget. Voting yes: Democrats Hertel, Ford, Levin.

Voting no: Republicans Pursell, Broomfield.

3. CUTTING BUDGET — By a vote of 189 for and 200 against, the House on July 29 rejected an amendment to inflict a cut of 3.51 percent on virtually all areas of the House version of the 1987 legislative branch appropriations bill.

A yes vote was in favor of the cut.

Voting yes: Republicans Pursell, Broomfield.

Voting no: Democrats Hertel, Ford, Levin.

4. ELEVATOR OPERATORS — By a vote of 168 for and 238 against, the House on July 29 rejected an amendment to lower congressional spending by \$91,450 in order to eliminate the jobs of seven House patronage employees who operate elevators that are automatic.

A yes vote was to begin phasing out the House elevator operators.

Voting yes: Pursell.

Voting no: Hertel, Ford, Levin and Broomfield.

5. HOUSE COMMITTEES — The House on July 29 rejected, 172 for and 237 against, an amendment to cut \$4.3 million from the 1987 House budget for committee staffs.

A yes vote was in favor of the added funding. Voting yes: Pursell.

Voting no: Hertel, Ford, Levin and Broomfield.

6. SENATE COMMITTEES — By a vote of 27-69, the Senate on March 13 refused to authorize a special reserve fund of \$1.5 million for unexpected Senate committee expenses.

A yes vote was in favor of the added funding.

Voting no: Carl Levin, Donald Riegle, both Michigan Democrats.

7. PAC LIMITS — The Senate adopted, 69 for and 30 against, an amendment on Aug. 12 to limit contributions to Congressional candidates by the political action committees (PAC) of special interest groups. The proposed curbs, however, later were shelved.

Currently, there is no ceiling on the total PAC money candidates can receive, although there are limits on what individual PACs can give individual candidates.

A yes vote was in favor of limiting PAC contributions. Voting yes: Levin, Riegle.

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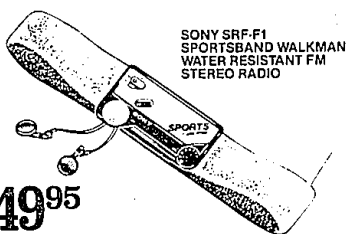
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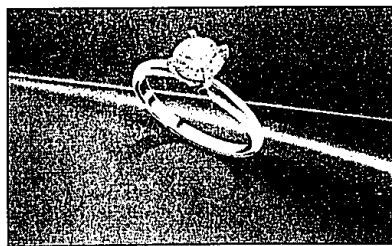
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